



Grades 6–8 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards

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Introduction

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has utilized the services of WestEd and the Understanding Language Initiative at Stanford University to develop a new set of English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. The ELP Standards, developed for K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grades, highlight and amplify the *critical language, knowledge about language, and skills using language* that are in college-and-career-ready standards and that are necessary for English language learners (ELLs) to be successful in schools.

The 10 ELP Standards highlight a strategic set of language functions (what students do with language to accomplish content-specific tasks) and language forms (vocabulary, grammar, and discourse specific to a particular content area or discipline) which are needed by ELLs as they develop competence in the practices associated with English language arts (ELA) & literacy, mathematics, and science (Bunch, Kiber, & Pimentel, 2013; CCSSO, 2012; Lee, Quinn, & Valdez, 2013; Moschkovich, 2012; van Lier & Walqui, 2012). The five ELP levels for each of the ELP Standards address the question, **“What might an ELL’s language use look like at each ELP level as he or she progresses toward independent participation in grade-appropriate activities?”**

How to Navigate this Document

The ELP Standards and supporting tools in this document are arranged in layers, with more detail added in each new layer. Use the hyperlinks either in the Table of Contents on pages 1–2 or in the bookmarks to the left of each page to navigate to the level of detail needed. The bookmark feature [in PDFs] and the navigation pane or Document Map [in Word documents] can be activated using the document tool bar. The ELP Standards with correspondences are labeled using the dot notation system (e.g., Standard 3 = ELP.6-8.3.).

Guiding Principles

1. Potential

ELLs have the same potential as native speakers of English to engage in cognitively complex tasks. Regardless of ELP level, all ELLs need access to challenging, grade-appropriate¹ curriculum, instruction, and assessment and benefit from activities requiring them to create linguistic output (Ellis, 2008a; 2008b). Even though ELLs will produce language that includes features that distinguish them from their native-English-speaking peers, “it is possible [for ELLs] to achieve the standards for college-and-career readiness” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010b, p. 1).

2. Funds of Knowledge

ELLs’ primary languages and other social, cultural, and linguistic background knowledge and resources (i.e., their “funds of knowledge” [Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992]) are useful tools to help them navigate back and forth among their schools and their communities’ valuable resources as they develop the social, cultural, and linguistic competencies required for effective communication in English. In particular, an awareness of culture should be embedded within curriculum, instruction, and

¹ Grade appropriate is defined by the English language arts, mathematics, and science standards for that grade.

assessment provided to ELLs since “the more one knows about the other language and culture, the greater the chances of creating the appropriate cultural interpretation of a written or spoken text” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006, p. 37).

3. Diversity in ELL Progress in Acquiring English Language Proficiency

A student’s ability to demonstrate proficiency at a particular ELP level will depend on context, content-area focus, and developmental factors. Thus, a student’s designated ELP level represents a typical current performance level, not a fixed status. An English language proficiency level does not identify a student (e.g., “Level 1 student”), but rather identifies what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of English language development, for example, “a student at Level 1” or “a student whose listening performance is at Level 1.” Progress in acquiring English may vary depending upon program type, age at which entered program, initial English proficiency level, native language literacy, and other factors (Bailey & Heritage, 2010; Byrnes & Canale, 1987; Lowe & Stansfield, 1988). Within these ELP Standards, we assume parallel development of language and content-area knowledge, skills, and abilities. ELLs do not need to wait until their ELP is sufficiently developed to participate in content area instruction and assessment. “Research has shown that ELLs can develop literacy in English even as their oral proficiency in English develops (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2013, p. 15).

4. Scaffolding

ELLs at all levels of ELP should be provided with scaffolding in order to reach the next reasonable proficiency level as they develop grade-appropriate language capacities, particularly those that involve content-specific vocabulary and registers. The type and intensity of the scaffolding provided will depend on each student’s ability to undertake the particular task independently while continuing to uphold appropriate complexity for the student.

5. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

ELLs with limited or interrupted formal education must be provided access to targeted supports that allow them to develop foundational literacy skills in an accelerated time frame (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Educators can refer to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA section “Reading: Foundational Skills” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010) for this purpose.

6. Special Needs

ELLs with disabilities can benefit from English language development services (and are required to have language development goals as part of their Individualized Education Plans [IEPs]). Educators should be aware that these students may take slightly different paths toward English language proficiency.

7. Access Supports and Accommodations

Based on their individual needs, all ELLs, including ELLs with disabilities, should be provided access supports and accommodations for assessments, so that their assessment results are valid and reflect what they know and can do. Educators should be aware

that these access supports and accommodations can be used in classroom instruction and assessment to ensure that students have access to instruction and assessment based on the ELP Standards. When identifying the access supports and accommodations that should be considered for ELLs and ELLs with IEPs or 504 plans during classroom instruction and assessment, it is particularly useful to consider ELL needs in relation to receptive and productive modalities. (See footnote in Table 2 for more information.)

8. Multimedia, Technology, and New Literacies

New understandings around literacy (e.g., visual and digital literacies) have emerged around use of information and communication technologies (International Reading Association, 2009). Relevant, strategic, and appropriate multimedia tools and technology, aligned to the ELP Standards, should be integrated into the design of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for ELLs.

Design Features of the Standards

The 10 ELP Standards are designed for collaborative use by English as a second language (ESL)/English language development (ELD) and content area teachers in **both** English language development and content-area instruction. Explicit recognition that language acquisition takes place across the content areas fosters collaboration among educators and benefits ELLs' learning experiences.

At present, second language development is seen largely as the responsibility of the ESL/ELD teacher, while content development as that of the subject area teacher. Given the new [content] standards' explicitness in how language must be used to enact disciplinary knowledge and skills, such a strict division of labor is no longer viable. Content area teachers must understand and leverage the language and literacy practices found in science, mathematics, history/social studies, and the language arts to enhance students' engagement with rich content and fuel their academic performance. ESL/ELD teachers must cultivate a deeper knowledge of the disciplinary language that ELL students need, and help their students to grow in using it. Far greater collaboration and sharing of expertise are needed among ESL/ELD teachers and content area teachers at the secondary level. At the elementary level, far greater alignment and integration are needed across ESL/ELD and subject matter learning objectives, curriculum, and lesson plans that teachers in self-contained classrooms prepare and deliver (Understanding Language Initiative, 2012, p. 2).

The levels 1–5 descriptors for each of the 10 ELP Standards describe targets for ELL performance by the end of each ELP level at a particular point in time. However, students may demonstrate a range of abilities within each ELP level. By describing the end of each ELP level for each ELP Standard, the levels 1–5 descriptors reflect a linear progression across the proficiency levels of an aligned set of knowledge, skills, and abilities. This is done for purposes of presentation and understanding; actual second language acquisition does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion within or across proficiency levels.

An ELL at any given point along his or her trajectory of English learning may exhibit some abilities (e.g., speaking skills) at a higher proficiency level, while at the same time exhibiting other abilities (e.g., writing skills) at a lower proficiency level. Additionally, a student may successfully perform a particular skill at a lower proficiency level but need review at the next higher proficiency level

when presented with a new or more complex type of text. As a reminder, by definition, ELL status is a temporary status. Thus, an English language proficiency level does not identify a student (e.g., “a Level 1 student”), but rather identifies what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of English language development (e.g., “a student at Level 1” or “a student whose listening performance is at Level 1”).

Organization of the Standards

For the purposes of clarity, the 10 ELP Standards are organized according to a schema that represents each standard’s importance to ELLs’ participation in the practices called for by college- and-career-ready ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science standards (G. Bunch, personal communication, August 15, 2013; Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2013).

Table 1. Organization of the ELP Standards in Relation to Participation in Content-Area Practices

1	construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing
2	participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions
3	speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics
4	construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence
5	conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems
6	analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing
7	adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing
8	determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text
9	create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text
10	make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing

Standards 1 through 7 involve the language necessary for ELLs to engage in the central content-specific practices associated with ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science. They begin with a focus on extraction of meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices.

Standards 8 through 10 home in on some of the more micro-level linguistic features that are undoubtedly important to focus on, but only in the service of the other seven standards.

Grades 6–8 English Language Proficiency Standards with Correspondences to the K-12 Practices and Grade 6 ELA Standards

The ELP Standards are interrelated and can be used separately or in combination. (In particular, as shown on the previous page, Standards 8–10 can be used to support the other seven standards.) These standards do not include curriculum statements, nor do they privilege a single approach to the teaching of social and expressive communication or the teaching of grammar; instead, the standards and descriptors for each proficiency level leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how each ELP Standard and descriptor should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed.

Alternate organization of the ELP Standards

The ELP Standards might also be framed in relation to narrower domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and also in relation to broader receptive,² productive, and interactive modalities. The interactive modalities category allows for emphasis on the need for ELLs to meaningfully engage with their native English-speaking peers during content area instruction. (Standards 9 and 10 address the linguistic structures of English and are framed in relation to the CCSS for ELA Language domain.)

Receptive³ modalities: This mode refers to the learner as a reader or listener/viewer working with ‘text’ whose author or deliverer is not present or accessible. It presumes that the interaction is with authentic written or oral documents where language input is meaningful and content laden. The learner brings background knowledge, experience, and appropriate interpretive strategies to the task to promote understanding of language and content in order to develop a personal reaction. (Phillips, 2008, p. 96)	Listening and reading	1	construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing
		8	determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text
Productive modalities: The mode places the learner as speaker and writer for a ‘distant’ audience, one with whom interaction is not possible or limited. The communication is set for a specified audience, has purpose, and generally abides by rules of genre or style. It is a planned or formalized speech act or written document, and the learner has an opportunity to draft, get feedback, and revise, before publication or broadcast. (Phillips, 2008, p. 96)	Speaking and writing	3	speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics
		4	construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence
		7	adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing
Interactive modalities: Collaborative use of receptive and productive modalities. This mode refers to the learner as a speaker/listener [and] reader/writer. It requires two-way interactive communication where negotiation of meaning may be observed. The exchange will provide evidence of awareness of the socio-cultural aspects of communication as language proficiency develops. (Phillips, 2008, p. 96)	Listening, speaking, reading, and writing	2	participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions
		5	conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems
		6	analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing

² The terms receptive and productive language functions were used for the ELP standards schema, rather than the newer American Council of Foreign Language Teaching (ACTFL) terms used in Phillips (2008), in keeping with the functional language terms used in the CCSSO (2012) ELPD Framework (which employs the earlier ACTFL terminology).

³ The ability to communicate via multiple modes of representation (e.g., non-verbal communication, oral, pictorial, graphic, textual) may be especially important for ELLs with certain types of disabilities. When identifying the access supports and accommodations that should be considered for ELLs and ELLs with IEPs or 504 plans, it is particularly useful to consider ELL needs in relation to broader receptive, productive, and interactive modalities when listening, speaking, reading, or writing are not the explicit focus of the construct(s) being instructed or assessed.

Grades 6–8 ELP Standards

Standards 1 and 2

		By the end of each English language proficiency level, an ELL can . . .				
		1	2	3	4	5
<u>1</u>	An ELL can . . . construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.	use a very limited set of strategies to identify a few key words and phrases in oral communications and simple written texts.	use an emerging set of strategies to identify the main topic, and retell a few key details in oral communications and simple written texts.	use a developing set of strategies to determine the central idea or theme in simple oral presentations or written text, and explain how it is supported by specific details, and summarize part of the text.	use an increasing range of strategies to determine two or more central ideas or themes in oral presentations or written text, and explain how they are supported by specific textual details, and summarize a simple text.	use a wide range of strategies to determine central ideas or themes in oral presentations or written text, and explain how they are developed by supporting ideas or evidence, and summarize a text.
<u>2</u>	An ELL can . . . participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.	participate in short conversational and written exchanges on familiar topics, presenting simple information and responding to simple questions and some wh-questions.	participate in short conversational and written exchanges on familiar topics and texts, presenting information and ideas and responding to simple questions and wh-questions.	participate in conversations, discussions, and written exchanges on familiar topics and texts; building on the ideas of others and express his or her own; asking and answering relevant questions; and adding relevant information.	participate in conversations, discussions, and written exchanges about a variety of topics, texts, and issues; building on the ideas of others and expressing his or her own; asking and answering relevant questions; adding relevant information and evidence; and paraphrasing the key ideas expressed.	participate in extended conversations, discussions, and written exchanges about a variety of topics, texts, and issues; building on the ideas of others and expressing his or her own clearly; posing and responding to relevant questions; adding relevant and specific evidence; and summarizing and reflecting on the key ideas expressed.

Grades 6–8 English Language Proficiency Standards with Correspondences to the K-12 Practices and Grade 6 ELA Standards

Standards 3, 4, and 5

		By the end of each English language proficiency level, an ELL can . . .				
		1	2	3	4	5
<u>3</u>	An ELL can . . . speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.	communicate simple information about familiar texts, topics, and experiences.	deliver short oral presentations and compose written narratives or informational texts about familiar texts, topics, experiences, or events.	deliver short oral presentations and compose written narratives or informational texts about familiar texts, topics, and experiences, developed with some details.	deliver oral presentations and compose written narratives or informational texts about a variety of texts, topics, and experiences, developed with some specific details.	deliver oral presentations and compose written narratives or informational texts about a variety of texts, topics, and experiences, developed with relevant details, ideas, or information.
<u>4</u>	An ELL can . . . construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.	express an opinion about familiar topics.	construct a claim about familiar topics and give a reason to support the claim.	construct a claim about a familiar topic: introduce the topic and provide several supporting reasons or facts in a logical order, and provide a concluding statement.	construct a claim about a variety of topics: introduce the topic, provide sufficient reasons or facts to support the claim, and provide a concluding statement.	construct a claim about a variety of topics: introduce the topic, provide compelling and logically ordered reasons or facts that effectively support the claim, and provide a concluding statement.
<u>5</u>	An ELL can . . . conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.	gather information from a few provided sources and label collected information.	gather information from provided sources and record some data and information.	gather information from multiple provided print and digital sources and summarize or paraphrase observations, ideas, and information, with labeled illustrations, diagrams, or other graphics, as appropriate, and cite sources.	gather information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others, using charts, diagrams, or other graphics, as appropriate; and cite sources, using a standard format for citation.	gather information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; and (at Grade 8) evaluate the credibility of each source; quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others, using charts, diagrams, or other graphics, as appropriate; and cite sources, using a standard format for citation.

Grades 6–8 English Language Proficiency Standards with Correspondences to the K-12 Practices and Grade 6 ELA Standards

Standards 6, 7, and 8

		By the end of each English language proficiency level, an ELL can . . .				
		1	2	3	4	5
6	An ELL can . . . analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.	identify a point an author or a speaker makes.	identify the main argument and one reason an author or a speaker gives to support the argument.	explain the argument an author or a speaker makes and distinguish between claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from those that are not.	analyze the argument and specific claims in texts or speech, determining whether the evidence is sufficient to support the claims, and cite textual evidence to support the analysis.	analyze and evaluate the argument and specific claims in texts or speech/presentations, determining whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims; and cite textual evidence to support the analysis.
7	An ELL can . . . adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.	recognize the meaning of some words learned through conversations, reading, and being read to.	adapt language choices according to task and audience with emerging control, and begin to use frequently occurring general academic and content-specific words and phrases in conversations and discussions.	adapt language choices and style according to purpose, task, and audience, with developing ease; use an increasing number of general academic and content-specific words and phrases in speech and short written texts, and show developing control of style and tone in oral or written text.	adapt language choices and style according to purpose, task, and audience, with increasing ease; use a wider range of general academic and content-specific academic words and phrases, and maintain consistency in style and tone throughout most of oral or written text.	adapt language choices and style according to purpose, task, and audience, with ease; use a wide variety of complex general academic and content-specific academic words to express ideas precisely, and maintain an appropriate and consistent style and tone throughout an oral or written text.
8	An ELL can . . . determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.	recognize the meaning of a few frequently occurring words and simple phrases in texts about familiar topics, experiences, or events, relying heavily on context, visual aids, and knowledge of morphology in their native language.	determine the meaning of frequently occurring words, phrases, and expressions in texts about familiar topics, experiences, or events, using context, visual aids, reference materials, and knowledge of morphology in their native language.	determine the meaning of general academic and content-specific words and phrases and frequently occurring expressions in texts about familiar topics, experiences, or events, using context, visual aids, reference materials, and a developing knowledge of English morphology (e.g., affixes, roots, base words).	determine the meaning of general academic and content-specific words and phrases, and a growing number of idiomatic expressions in texts about a variety of topics, experiences, or events, using context, reference materials, and an increasing knowledge of morphology.	determine the meaning (including the figurative and connotative meanings) of general academic and content-specific words and phrases, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language (e.g., metaphor, personification) in texts about a variety of topics, experiences, or events, using context, reference materials, and knowledge of morphology.

Standards 9 and 10

		By the end of each English language proficiency level, an ELL can . . .				
		1	2	3	4	5
<u>9</u>	An ELL can . . . create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text.	communicate simple information about an event or topic, with support (including context and visual aids) using non-verbal communication and, with limited control, a narrow range of vocabulary and syntactically simple sentences.	recount a brief sequence of events in order, and introduce an informational topic, present one or two facts about it, and provide a concluding statement, with support (including sentences), using, with emerging control, some commonly occurring linking words (e.g., <i>next, because, and, also</i>).	recount a short sequence of events, with a beginning, middle, and an end, and introduce and develop an informational topic with a few facts and details, and provide a conclusion, using, with developing control, common transitional words and phrases to connect events, ideas, and opinions (e.g., <i>after a while, for example, in order to, as a result</i>).	recount a more detailed sequence of events or steps in a process, with a beginning, middle, and an end, and introduce and develop an informational topic with facts and details, and provide a concluding section or statement, using, with increasingly independent control, a variety of transitional words and phrases to connect events, ideas, and opinions (e.g., <i>however, on the other hand, from that moment on</i>).	recount a complex sequence of events or steps in a process, with a beginning, middle, and an end, and introduce and effectively develop an informational topic with facts and details, and provide a concluding section or statement, using a wide variety of transitional words and phrases to show logical relationships between events and ideas.
<u>10</u>	An ELL can . . . make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing.	recognize and use a small number of frequently occurring nouns, noun phrases, and verbs, and understand and respond to simple questions.	use nouns, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositional phrases, and produce simple and compound sentences, with support (including visual aids and sentences).	use relative pronouns (e.g., <i>who, whom, which, that</i>), relative adverbs (e.g., <i>where, when, why</i>), subordinating conjunctions, and prepositional phrases, and produce and expand simple, compound, and a few complex sentences, with support (including modeled sentences).	use an increasing number of intensive pronouns (e.g., <i>myself, ourselves</i>) and verbs in the active and passive voices; place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting most misplaced and dangling modifiers; and produce and expand simple, compound, and complex sentences.	use intensive pronouns and verbs in the active and passive voices; place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers; and produce and expand simple, compound, and complex sentences.